

Islamic Character Education in E-Learning Model: How Should It be Implemented?

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ABSTRACT

Recently, studies examining the inclusion of Islamic character education in schooling sectors have been exclusively discerned. The research mainly focused on teachers' and students' perceptions, curriculum and materials development, as well as policy implementation. Albeit the results of these studies shared significant insights in teacher education programs, very sparse discussions were carried out with regard to how the Islamic character education should be enacted. Interestingly, virtual education nowadays also challenges the implementation of this notion. In this work, therefore, we propose a model of Islamic character education cultivation employing e-learning approach in a schooling context. The use of participatory action research (PAR), additionally, is encouraged to capture learning cycles of Islamic character in the classroom between teachers and students. This proposal, if implemented by teachers, would contribute to better realization of moderate teachings of Islam through character education.

Keywords: Islamic character education, PAR, e-learning, school

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization affects rapidly changing dimensions in every sectors of human life, including in the education institution. Teachers in many schools around the world are now altering their conventional teaching method to the new emerging technology-enhanced teaching by utilizing online learning media effectively to support their students' learning engagement (Kaufhold, Bayer, & Reuter, 2020; Vie, 2018). This has brought to the realization that education is nowadays cannot be separated from technology.

E-learning is one, among other terms, platform geared by this development (Choudhury & Pattnaik, 2020; Mayer, 2019; Tongkaw, 2013). In this platform, teaching and learning are mostly done virtually, and the interaction of teachers and students do not always take place inside the classroom. Besides, e-learning is potential to cultivate students' autonomous learning through this virtual enactment. Through this online interaction, both teachers and students are engaged collaboratively to negotiate their meaning in a given tasks.

A number of studies have been carried out to uncover the potentials of e-learning in educational sectors. In Iran, for instance, Talebian, Mohammadi, & Rezvanfar (2014) suggested that e-learning encompasses easy access, equity, flexibility, and group collaboration enhancement for both teachers and students. In Turkey, Kimiloglu, Ozturan, & Kutlu (2017) elaborated that e-learning platform is perceived as convenient, leading to extending self-motivation for teachers and learners. This idea is confirmed by (Zainuddin, 2018) in Malaysian schooling contexts. In his work, Zainuddin explored the students' engagement and motivation construction in e-learning process.

In the Indonesian educational settings, e-learning activities have been massively conducted. It is because the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Indonesia believed that the country development in education sectors should be aligned with the world advances of technology, thus leading to empowering e-learning in school levels (Zainuddin, 2018). In the vocational level, for

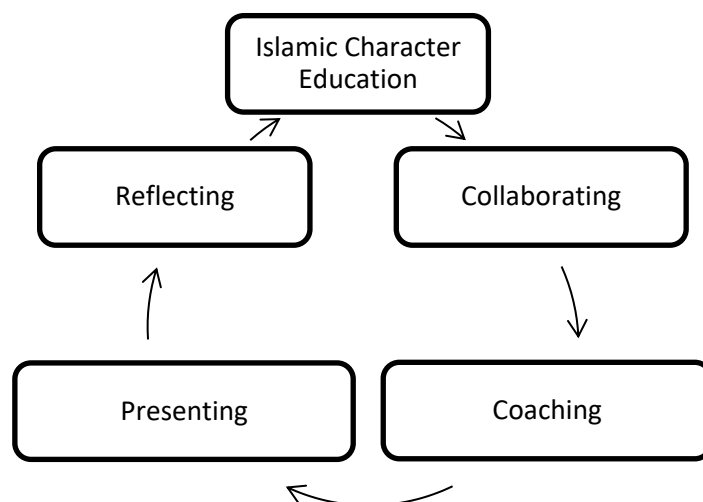
instance, Triyono (2015) have found that teachers in Vocational High School engaged actively in materials construction using e-learning platform. Anchored by the idea of gamification in learning, Sari, Fadillah, Jonathan, & David Prabowo, (2019) tested their e-learning application which employ Smartphone – to support blind children learning engagement. In their study, the students found this application useful and convenient if compared to the traditional learning activities.

Given the convenience of e-learning entails in education, there is an awareness to integrate Islamic character education within the practice of e-learning in the Indonesian schooling sectors (Wibawa & Purwarianti, 2016). Memon (2011) asserts that it is central for Islamic teachers to navigate Islamic education which corresponds to the globalized world by maintaining character education in the curriculum. The idea of teaching Islamic character education in the Islamic schooling as suggested by Memon portrays various assumptions. One of them is to enable Islamic schools to compete with public schools which have been standardized. Scholars hold dissimilar perspectives of Islamic character education. For instance, Halim Tamuri (2007) named it as teaching *akhlaq* (moral values). Meanwhile, other scholars do not have an agreed definition for this notion. In essence, the Islamic education character is a term used to describe norms and values pertaining to Islamic ethical understandings (Memon, 2011; Saada & Gross, 2017).

In response to this initiative, we have explored that scant publications are written to document how to incorporate Islamic character education within e-learning platforms (Saada & Gross, 2017) in schooling sectors. To fill this void, we put forward a model for teaching Islamic character education viewed from our reflections. These contemplations are derived from our intensive face-to-face meetings, classroom observations, and in-depth interviews with pre-school teachers in Malang, East Java, Indonesia. These teachers were invited to attend a teacher professional development workshop dedicated to navigating Islamic character education in the Indonesian schooling contexts.

2. THE MODEL

Cycle of Teaching Islamic Character Education



This model is anchored by the idea of Saada & Gross (2017) which sees principles of Islamic character education as potential theories to be included in the curriculum in schooling sectors. It starts by putting the notion of Islamic character education on top of students' shared goals. The

objective is to lead the students to understanding that values and attitudes are central for their social interactions (Yang, 2018).

In addition to locating the Islamic character education on top the Model, we decide to use the term *Collaborating* for the next learning cycle. In this stage, by using e-learning platforms (i.e. Facebook), students can be assigned to make Peer Facebook Activity (PFA). Lin (2018) supported the use of Peer Facebook activity in learning engagement since this platform allows for effective peer feedback, peer mentoring, and peer assessment among the students.

To persist this collaboration, the teachers need to carry out *coaching*. In this respect, the students can consult to the teachers about their understandings of the topic discussed in the classroom. According to Stoetzel & Shedrow (2020), this coaching encompasses authentic realization of certain complexities that the students face in the learning process. Coaching, as suggested by scholars, can be carried out using several e-learning platforms such as online learning websites.

Furthermore, the model then proposes *presenting* activity as a channel for the students to cross-check their understandings of topics with their peers. We include this term as practical enactment in student-student interaction. The benefit entailed in *presenting* activity covers the students' awareness to monitor their learning after being commented by their peers (Trainor, 2012).

Lastly, *reflecting* is put at the end of the learning cycle. This aims at recalling and remembering activities done in the previous three stages. Reflection is a part of echoing students learning engagement (Pai, Ko, Eng, & Yen, 2017). In this model, these four stages lead to students' understanding of Islamic character education in the forms of collaboration, self-awareness, respecting each other, and self-engagement.

3. CONCLUSION

In this proposal, we model how to integrate the Islamic character education values using e-learning platforms. The examples provided in this paper are not limited, and thus, other scholars are encouraged to employ more various platforms of e-learning in their research and teaching practices. We also have outlined several facts why this proposal is central to be applied by teachers, particularly in the Indonesian schooling contexts. To add the discussion and further elaboration of this model, we encourage more investigations from researchers on using the model in the classroom. For instance, the deployment of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to generate negotiation on learning materials is worth-doing. PAR is believed to effective if applied in this model.

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